Cognitive science is an interdisciplinary field overlapping several fields including psychology, linguistics, computer science, philosophy, and anthropology. No student majoring in cognitive psychology is expected to have as much knowledge in any of these fields as students who major in these fields. However, the cognitive science major should better understand the interrelations between these fields than any other major. The cognitive science major should be well-prepared for graduate work in cognitive science or a cognate discipline and should be equipped for a career in a field that requires communication skills, analytic skills, a general knowledge of human cognition, and a basic knowledge of information technology. Such careers include science journalism, technical writing, technical support, technical recruiting, human resources, and information technology.

A. Expected Results of the Cognitive Science Major

1. Basic knowledge of the four foundational areas psychology, philosophy, artificial intelligence, and language and culture (linguistics and anthropology).

2. General knowledge of issues and theories involving cognitive processes and structures drawn from psychology, linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, and artificial intelligence, and knowledge of the way the work in these fields is interrelated.

3. Working knowledge of issues and theories involving cognitive processes and structures within two of the four foundational areas psychology, philosophy, artificial intelligence, and language and culture (linguistics and anthropology).

B. Assessment Methods and Procedures

Every student will provide an exit essay and every student will undergo either an exit interview or the more formal oral exit exam in his/her final semester. At least 25% of students finishing the major in a given year will stand the oral exit exam. These students will be selected by random drawing.

1. Exit Essay

An essay, which need not be completed at one sitting, discussing the student’s expectations upon entering the cognitive science major, how well those expectations have been met, career plans, and how the major has helped the student prepare for a career.

2. Exit Interview

An interview, administered by a cognitive science faculty member, structured to determine, on an informal and intimate basis, student response to the major program, teaching effectiveness of the faculty teaching courses used to satisfy requirements for the major, and the ability of the student to recall and use knowledge about cognitive processes and structures.

3. Oral Exit Exam

An exam administered by a small group of cognitive science faculty members to evaluate the ability of the student to recall and use knowledge about cognitive processes and structures.
C. The Use of Assessment Results for Improvement of the Major Program

All assessment results will be assembled and summarized by the undergraduate coordinator for review by the Faculty Fellows of the Artificial Intelligence Center (who serve as the faculty body administering the undergraduate major in cognitive science.) The results, and possible modifications in the major program, will be discussed annually at an appropriate meeting of the faculty.